

Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet
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SWIMMING ADVISORIES TO CONTINUE AT KENTUCKY SITES
New data being evaluated

FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 30, 2006) - Swimming advisories that have been in place for several years in different areas of the state will remain in effect until new data can be analyzed.

The Division of Water in the Environmental and Public Protection Cabinet and the Division of Public Health Protection and Safety in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services agree that advisories, in place because of high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, should remain in effect.

People should avoid swimming and other recreational contact with waters in the areas specified because of the bacteria, which occur in human and animal waste and indicate the presence of untreated or inadequately treated sewage. The bacteria create a potential for diarrheal illnesses and other infectious diseases.

“This information is provided to our citizens to help them make informed good public health decisions regarding where they swim. Simply not swimming in these areas is an easy, preventable measure to reduce the likelihood of contracting an illness,” said Steve Davis, M.D., deputy commissioner of the Department for Public Health.

Swimming advisories will remain in effect for the following:

Upper Cumberland River

- The Cumberland River from Fourmile Bridge (Highway 2014) to Pineville at the Highway 66 Bridge and from Wallins Creek Bridge (Highway 219) to Harlan.
- Martins Fork from Harlan to the Cawood Water Plant.
- All of Catron Creek, all of Clover Fork and all of Straight Creek.
- Poor Fork from Harlan to Looney Creek.
- Looney Creek from the mouth to Lynch Water Plant Bridge.

Illegal straight pipe discharges, failing septic systems and bypasses from sewage collection systems contribute to water quality problems in these areas.

Kentucky River

- North Fork of the Kentucky River upstream of Chavies.

Numerous illegal straight pipe discharges of sewage contribute to water quality problems along this section of the river. However, water quality has continued to improve and is approaching an acceptable level for swimming in some stretches of the river.

Licking River

- Banklick Creek to the confluence with the Ohio River.

The swimming advisory includes all of Banklick Creek and Three Mile Creek. High fecal coliform pollution in this area is caused by combined sewer overflows and sanitary sewer overflows.

Residential and agricultural areas

The agencies also recommend against swimming or other full-body contact with surface waters immediately following heavy rainfall events, especially in dense residential, urban and livestock production areas. This recommendation is due to an increased potential for exposure to pollution from urban nonpoint source pollution, bypasses from sewage collection systems, combined sewer overflows and pollution from livestock waste.

A new indicator for harmful bacteria and new data are being evaluated. A new advisory will be issued if there are indications that any portions of the streams listed can be removed. The Cabinet for Health and Family Services and local health department environmental health staff make sure all new septic system installations are installed properly, reducing fecal coliform pollution from these possible sources. Division of Water and wastewater plant operators monitor and ensure sewer overflows are minimized. Both agencies routinely address straight pipe issues and are gradually reducing the number of these discharges across the state.